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and destructive impulses. If the child feels this strong and persistent need to get satisfaction from sucking, we can be quite sure that he is suffering from great anxiety connected with oral destructive impulses. That is why, when we forcibly deprive him of this gratification, we often throw him into a state of overwhelming, helpless exasperation, which must have a far more serious effect upon the mental life than the sucking itself.

The physical harm of thumb-sucking, either to mouth or thumb, is undoubtedly much exaggerated. It is probable that it rarely does any permanent harm. But the forcible deprivation of the thumb-sucking always does cause more serious psychological disturbance. Some children take to bed-wetting, some to later stammering, some to the habit of sucking their tongues (a habit much more likely to persist than the thumb-sucking itself, since it is not open to deflection by the growing manipulative skill of the hands, as thumb-sucking is; and in any case it is uglier to watch). Other children show a great increase of general guilt and anxiety, night terrors, and so on, as well as to more marked open aggression to other children and grown-ups. There can be little question that if quite gentle attempts to prevent the child's hands from being put into his mouth do not succeed, forcible methods, such as tying the child's hands down or putting on woollen mittens, or scoldings or punishments, are extremely inadvisable.

It is unusual for the habit to persist after four or five years of age, except in occasional moments of stress, or possibly when falling asleep. The normal self-regard of the child of five and six years of age will lead him to give up this habit, as he becomes able to substitute other

gratifications and real achievement—even when it persists as late as this.

We touch here one of those points in which a great deal of the child psychology now being taught in academic text-books needs to be re-written. In recent years, there has been far too great an emphasis on the crude "habit" psychology, both in this and other regards. Thumb-sucking has been treated as a simple local reflex, of accidental, unknown origin, which must be mechanically interfered with, without any inquiry being made as to the origin of the first impulse towards the habit, or its meaning for the emotional life of the child. I have little doubt that forcible interferences